



TASSO'S AUTOGRAPH RETRACED AND REDISCOVERED. THE POEM OFFERED TO THE POLISH AMBASSADOR STANISŁAW RESZKA IN THE COPY OF THE BRITISH LIBRARY

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Abstract

The goal of this article is to present a new reading of a short dedicatory poem offered by an outstanding poet of the Italian Renaissance, Torquato Tasso, to Stanisław Reszka, the abbot in Jędrzejów, the secretary of Stanisław Hozjusz, and, in this specific case, the ambassador of the Polish king Sigismund III to the Kingdom of Naples.

The poet and the ambassador met in 1594 in Naples, where both were recovering from illnesses. Their meeting took place shortly after the publication of *Jerusalem conquered*, which was a recomposed version of *Jerusalem delivered*, published in 1593. The poet wished to present his newly created work to men of letters and in common opinion it would have been difficult to find in Naples anyone more estimable than Reszka in those days.

Torquato Tasso offered to Stanisław Reszka a copy of his new book with a dedication in the form of a short, eight-verse poem of his own creation. Until now, the *ottava* was known from the transcription contained in *Bibliografia critica* by S. Ciampi and in the Italian edition of Tasso's letters, published by C. Guasti. In Polish literary circles the text of the poem was known thanks to the work of Professor Windakiewicz, who at the close of the 19th century published it in Polish translation and some time later the original text of the poem.

The lead to the British Library copy was discovered during the course of research on early printed books owned or written by Stanisław Reszka and preserved in the collection of the Jagiellonian Library. With the generous help of Stephen Parkin, the curator of the Italian collection in the British Library, the original of the autograph was found, and thus it became possible to compare the existing texts with the original. During the comparison it appeared that the transcription given by Ciampi with the help of the Roman bookseller Giovanni Petrucci differs in some places from the British Library original.

The author proposes a new reading of several uncertain places based on his own palaeographic experience as well as on the help of relevant reference works from the epoch.

Key words: Torquato Tasso, Stanisław Reszka, Sebastiano Ciampi, Stanisław Winda-kiewicz, *Jerusalem conquered*, *Gerusalemme conquistata*, *ottava*, dedication, dedicatory poem on the fly leaf, new reading, Renaissance literature

Torquato Tasso (1544–1595), one of the greatest poets of the Italian renaissance, if not of the Italian literature as a whole, owns his perennial glory to the epic poem *Gerusalemme liberata* (*Jerusalem delivered*), finished in 1575, but published for the first time in 1581.¹ The cadence of verses, the incredible instrumentation of sounds, the choice of words and the innate music flowing from the poem make it an epic masterpiece of all times.² Just to offer a quick glimpse of the incomparable, mellifluous sound we could briefly focus our attention on four verses from the third *canto*,³

Ecco apparir Gierusalem si vede,
ecco additar Gierusalem si scorge,

¹ Although quite aged by now, but due to its deep insight into the background, the culture and the history of literature it is highly recommended to start from: F. de Santis, *History of Italian literature*, transl. J. Redfern, vol. II, New York 1959; see also P.A. Serassi, *La vita di Torquato Tasso scritta dall'abate Pierantonio Serassi*, Bergamo 1790; L. Tonelli, *Tasso*, Torino 1935; N. Sapegno, *Compendio di storia della letteratura italiana*, t. 2: *Cinquecento, Seicento, Settecento*, Firenze 1964; J.A. Symonds, *The Renaissance in Italy*, vol. I–II, Hildesheim–New York 1971; L. Poma, *Studi sul testo della Gerusalemme liberata*, Bologna 2005.

² It is not a place to discuss artistic and poetic elements of the poem, yet the sound instrumentation, understood as the specific choice of words, seems to be undervalued in critical works as not allowing a measurable analysis. However it is worth recalling a classic work by W.B. Stanford, *The Sound of Greek: Studies in the Greek Theory and Practice of Euphony*, Berkeley 1967, where it is possible to find instruments that give theoretical background to this aspect of literary criticism. As a matter of fact, as it is old Greek, not Cinquecento Italian, discussed by Stanford, we should remember that he only shows the route, the *praxis*, and not the final result.

³ The cited verses are from: T. Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, a cura di L. Caretti, Milano 1976, III, 3, 22–25; the latest critical edition advisable to consult when working on Tasso's *Gerusalemme* is T. Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, a cura di L. Caretti, Milano 2008.

ecco da mille voci unitamente
Gierusalemme salutar si sente.⁴

In Tasso's lifetime, however, the poem caused him much distress and bitterness. Sadly, but it was mainly poet's mind that played that cruel trick on him, and his mental illness, together with the weak health, heavily influenced the last years of Tasso's life.⁵

Many explanations were given by the researchers as to the reasons that induced Tasso to rewrite – or recompose – the poem, which finally was shown to the world with a new title, *Gerusalemme conquistata* (*Jerusalem conquered*). It was only 1593 that this new edition came to the audience, published by Guglielmo Facciotti.⁶

Not to walk a beat-trodden road,
There is hardly a change that is not unfortunate, second-hand, and done in cold blood. Tasso the poet had merged into Tasso the critic, the grammarian, the linguist, and with that row of terrible critics facing him. He changed even the music of it, the turns of expression by which he have courted the ear, and made the form more grave, more solemn – with the result that the poem is cold and insipid.⁷

Here's the *pendant* for the verses cited above,⁸

Ecco apparir Gerusalem si vede,
ecco additar Gerusalem si scorge:
ecco si grida omai, non si bisbiglia,
del gran Sion la nubilosa figlia.⁹

⁴ The cited repetition of two words "ecco" and "Gerusalem" is a famous commonplace to praise Tasso's mastery; see e.g. J. Gariolo, *Lope de Vega's "Jerusalén Conquistada" and Torquato Tasso's "Gerusalemme liberata": face to face*, Kassel 2005, p. 156.

⁵ It is a worthwhile to recall insightful opinion: "[...] Tasso fell ill from the vexation of it, almost as though the attacks [i.e. against the poem] had been personal; and he met his critics as enemies. But his worst enemy was in fact himself," F. de Santis, *op.cit.*, p. 639.

⁶ *Di Gerusalemme Conquistata Del Sig. Torquato Tasso Libri XXIII*, In Roma, Presso à G. Facciotti, M. D. XCIII.

⁷ F. de Santis, *op.cit.*, pp. 639–640.

⁸ Having written a doctoral thesis on the sound instrumentation I could have not omit the beauty and the ordinariness of the respective verses; I could not also refrain from citing both of them.

⁹ T. Tasso, *Gerusalemme conquistata*, a cura di L. Bonfigli, "Scrittori italiani" no. 246 and 247, Bari 1937; resource online www.bibliotecaitaliana.it (access: 07.03.2014).

The original structure of these four verses, contained in *Gerusalemme liberata*, their intrinsic dependence and musical rhythm, have been mutilated, decapitated, broken down and reduced into academic and unexciting composition. Alas. And to support myself, for the last time, with the handy phrase by de Santis: “*Jerusalem Conquered* is only the skeleton of all that rich living thing, but the skeleton being better joined and better connected and better mechanized than the other, he [Tasso] thought it the more perfect of the two.”¹⁰

But it is not the quality of the poem itself that we would like to focus our attention at, but its author, a certain acquaintance of him, and the *ottava* he has written as a dedication. Three altogether. In the year 1594¹¹ Torquato Tasso passed several months in Naples, recovering, getting strength, meeting *gente letteraria* and sometimes giving away copies of his refurbished poem. It was probably then that Tasso encountered the other patient, easing pain of his maladies. The patient was Stanisław Reszka,¹² an ambassador of the King of Poland Sigismund III to Naples.¹³ Tasso, when student in Padova, made some acquaintances with Polish learners; one of them was even mentioned in his juvenile poem “Rinaldo.”¹⁴ But Stanisław Reszka, met by Tasso in 1594, was a person from the king’s court, a man of letters, a diplomat: “tra i letterati illustri, ch’ ei vide più frequentemente [...] uno de’ primi fu Monsignor Stanislao Rescio Abate di Andreyovia, ed Ambasciatore di Sigismondo III. Re di Polonia e di Svezia nel Reame

¹⁰ F. de Santis, *op.cit.*, p. 640.

¹¹ Most probably from June till November, as it is presumed from his letters; see. T. Tasso, *Le lettere di Torquato Tasso*, a cura di C. Guasti, Firenze 1885, vol. 5, pp. 174–175.

¹² Mission of the ambassador to the Kingdom of Naples was the last diplomatic task received by Stanisław Reszka, who never came back to his homeland and died in Naples in 1600.

¹³ S. Ciampi, *Bibliografia critica delle antiche reciproche corrispondenze politiche, ecclesiastiche, letterarie, artistiche dell’ Italia colla Russia, colla Polonia ed altre parti settentrionali...*, Firenze 1834, s.v. “Reszka”, t. III, pp. 16–19. While in Italy, Reszka was referred to as Stanislaus Rescius (in Latin) or Stanislao Rescio (in Italian). There are suggestions that Tasso could have met Reszka in Naples in 1593, the year of publication of *Gerusalemme conquistata*, yet from the lecture of Tasso’s letters we could be quite sure as to the year 1594.

¹⁴ S. Windakiewicz, *I Polacchi a Padova*, [in:] *Omaggio dell’ Accademia Polacca di Scienze e Lettere all’ Università di Padova nel settimo centenario della sua fondazione*, Cracovia 1922, p. 19.

di Napoli. Questo [Signore] non men dotto, che pio [...].”¹⁵ Definitely – not *unus multorum*. Reszka, afflicted with frequent pains of “podagra and chiragra,”¹⁶ enjoyed meeting Torquato Tasso, and quickly they both became friends.¹⁷ The poet, maybe thinking of a somewhere-in-future quiet sojourn in Poland, offered Reszka a copy of his *Gerusalemme conquistata*, with an 8-verse *ad hoc* poem of his own writing. This poem became part of the common knowledge thanks to Sebastiano Ciampi, who had given its transcription,¹⁸

Al Sig. Stanislao Rescio Nunzio illustrissimo
Rescio, io passerò l'Alpestre monte
Portato a volo da Toscani carmi;
Giunto dirò con vergognosa fronte,
Dove ha tanti il tuo Re cavalli et Armi.
Altri di voi già scrive, altri racconta
L'altre imprese, e le scolpisca in marmi;
Nè taccia a tanti pregii onde rimbomba
Non minor fama la già stanca tromba.

Ciampi states he saw this copy of *Gerusalemme conquistata* in 1828 in Rome, in the possession of the bookseller Giovanni Battista Petrucci; Petrucci sold the original book to the count Guilford, and for a while we have lost a trace of it. Ciampi bought another copy of the same edition of

¹⁵ P.A. Serassi, *op.cit.*, v. III, p. 251; “amongst famous men of letters, whom he have seen frequently, one of the [most] prominent was Msgr. Stanislaw Rescio, abbot of Adreyovia [Jędrzejów], and Ambassador of Sigismund III, the King of Poland and Sweden, to the Kingdom of Naples. The man both erudite and devout [...]”

¹⁶ P.A. Serassi, *op.cit.*, v. III, p. 252; we should suppose that both names refer to what is now commonly defined as gout – in Reszka's case we have additional information that inflammatory arthritis he had was attacking his leg/legs and hand/hands.

¹⁷ T. Ulewicz, *L'opera poetica del Tasso nella coscienza culturale dei Polacchi*, [in:] *Tasso e l'Europa (con documentazione inedita). Atti del Convegno Internazionale (IV Centenario della morte del Poeta). Università di Bergamo, 24–25–26 Maggio 1995*, ed. D. Rota, Bergamo 1996, p. 141.

¹⁸ Ciampi for the first time published this poem in “Giornale Arcadico;” later, with some changes, also in his *Bibliografia critica...*, *op.cit.*, p. 17 – see *Le lettere di Torquato Tasso*, v. 5, p. 175, n. 3. Some words were then given a variant reading, as though Ciampi was not sure of the text. See also L. Locatelli, *L'autografo dell'ottava che T. Tasso scrisse per Mons. Reszka*, “Bergomum” 1925.

Gerusalemme conquistata, and the transcription of *ottava* was communicated to him by the bookseller.¹⁹

Slightly different reading of the poem can be found in Tasso's letters published by C. Guasti,

Rescio, s'io passerò l'alpestre monte,
 Portato a volo da toscani carmi,
 Giunto, dirò con vergognosa fronte,
 Dove ha tanti il tuo re cavalli et armi:
 Altri di voi già scrive, altri racconta
 Le altere imprese, e le scolpisca in marmi;
 Nè taccia a tanti pregi, onde rimbomba
 Non minor fama, la già stanca tromba.

The poem was also given an insight from Polish researchers, although much later.²⁰ In Poland (or rather in Polish-speaking circles, because in the 19th-century Poland was non-existent as a country) it was published for the first time in a newspaper "Czas,"²¹ in translation made by Stanisław Windakiewicz, a renowned academic, researcher, member of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Thirty years later Windakiewicz decided to remind readers with the Italian original, publishing the poem in two sources,²²

Al Sig. Stanislao Rescio Nunzio Illustrissimo
 Rescio, io passerò l'alpestre monte
 Portato a volo da toscani carmi;

¹⁹ The words used by Ciampi are unfortunately a bit equivocal, as it is not quite sure, in spite of his words, if he has seen the original *ottava* or the transcription: "Questa copia della Gerusalemme conquistata, essendo io a Roma l'anno 1828 la vidi preso l'erudito Gio. Battista Petrucci Libraro romano. Comprò il fu noto Conte Guilford originale. Il Petrucci trascrisse la detta ottava, e ne favori copia anche a me Sebastiano Ciampi." = "I have seen this copy of *Jerusalem delivered* by erudite Giovanni Battista Petrucci, Roman bookseller, when I was in Rome in 1828. The original was bought by late count Guilford. Petrucci transcribed mentioned *ottava* and have given a copy also to me, Sebastiano Ciampi."

²⁰ Apart from, cited below, articles by S. Windakiewicz, see also: R. Pollak, *Tasso w Polsce. Triumfy „Gofreda” i ścieżki cierniste „Orlanda,”* [in:] idem, *Wśród literatów staropolskich*, Warszawa 1966, s. 198–241; idem, *Il Tasso in Polonia* (translation to Italian), [w:] *Torquato Tasso*, Marzorati, Milano [1957], pp. 737–755.

²¹ S. Windakiewicz, *Tasso i Reszka*, „Czas” 1890 (XLIII), nr 212, 16 IX 1890.

²² Idem, *I Polacchi...*, *op.cit.*, s. 19; idem, *Polacy w Padwie*, „Przegląd Warszawski” 1922 (2), nr 10, s. 14.

Giunto dirò con vergognosa fronte,
Dove ha tanti il tuo Re' cavalli, et armi:
Altri di voi già avvive, altri racconta
Le altere imprese, e le scolpisca in marmi,
Nè taccia à tanti pregi onde rimbomba
Non minor fama la già stanca tromba.

These three transcriptions differ a little, especially it is to be noted a particle "se" – "if," omitted by Ciampi and Windakiewicz, as well as strangely sounding and unfitting "avvive" given by Windakiewicz, not to mention unconvincing "le altere imprese," as well as "Alpestre," explained by Ciampi as "Appennino," i.e. "the Apennine mountains." A. Cronia in his great work *La conoscenza del mondo Slavo in Italia* also refers the form "avvive," but his general opinion on this poem is rather negative, "I versi, per vero, sono infelici e risentono già del manierismo del linguaggio barocco."²³

It seemed right to try to find the original – and here begins the quest.²⁴ The Tasso was supposedly bought by the count Guilford. In 1828 there was only one Guilford possible, Frederic North (1766–1827), the 5th earl of Guilford, who collected books with a purpose to give a basis for the university library in Corfu.²⁵ However, after his death, his collection was sold in several auctions in January 1829 by London auctioneer Evans.²⁶ Reszka was evidently not known to the catalogue author, as constantly referred to as "Rescio;" yet the Tasso's copy of *Gerusalemme liberata* was highlighted in the auction catalogue: „This is a most curious and interesting volume. [...] The Ottava on the fly leaf, addressed by the poet to Rescio, will be viewed with deep emotion by every one who entertains a just reverence for

²³ "The verses, to say the truth, are unfortunate and already influenced by the mannerism of the Baroque language," A. Cronia, *La conoscenza del mondo slavo in Italia*, Padova 1958, p. 160–161; yet T. Ulewicz defines those verses as "moving," *op.cit.*: "[...] a questo incontro dobbiamo il commovente verso dedicatorio di pugno del Tasso [...]"

²⁴ Much of the research was possible due to the kind help of Stephen Parkin, the curator of Italian collection in the British Library, who provided me with valuable pieces of information and with the image.

²⁵ "The Guilford Project," online information, <http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/manuscripts/guilford/>, the British Library (access: 10.03.2013).

²⁶ "Catalogue of the valuable and extensive [...] library of the late earl of Guilford. [...] Which will be sold by auction, by mr. Evans [...] 1829;" the original catalogue in the British Library, electronic copy available by Googlebooks.

true Poetic genius.”²⁷ The Tasso was bought by a London bookseller named Thorpe for the price of £3 and 10 shillings. Then the book could have probably changed hands more than once, but in 1845 it was sold at Sotheby’s, as a part of Benjamin Heywood Bright library.²⁸ The buyer was the British Museum Library, the forerunner of the British Library. With the help of Stephen Parkin, Italian collection curator, the original was finally traced. The photographs sent to me by Parkin show unexciting 19th century binding, of yellowish skin, with mirror-like hand-pressed frames on covers, and endpapers with 18/19th century marbled paper. Golden letters on the spine say: TASSO / GERUSALLEMME / CONQUISTATA (in the middle) and ROMA 1593 (at the bottom); on the spine there is also a shelfmark: C. 28 (at the top) and: i 2 (at the bottom). Next page shows what we were looking for: a hand-written ottava by Tasso. Here are full book details:

Di Gervusalemme Conquistata Del. Sig. Torquato Tasso Libri XXIII. All’ Ill.^{mo} Et Rev.^{mo} Sig.^{re} Il Signor Cinthio Aldobrandini, Card. Di San Giorgio.
In Roma, M. D. XCIII, Presso à Guglielmo Facciotti.

Shelfmark: General Reference Collection C.28.i.2.

Owner: the British Library.

After attentive study I would venture to apply a new reading in four places,

Il poema al sig[nor] Stanislao Rescio
Nuncio Ill[ustrissi]mo

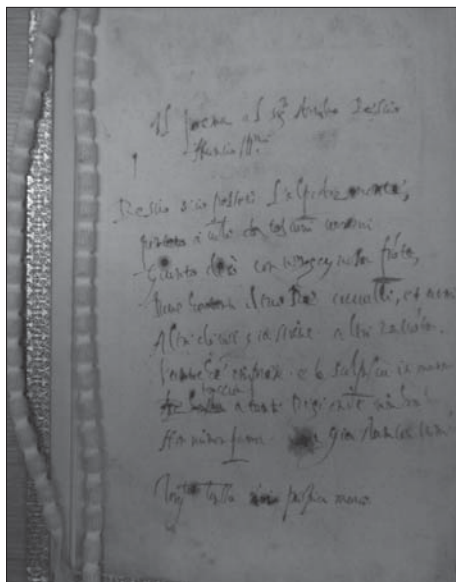
Rescio, s’io passerò l’alpestro monte
portato a’ volo da toscani carmi
Giunto dirò, con vergognosa fro[n]te,
Dove ha tanti il tuo Re’ cavalli, et armi.
Altri di voi già scrive altri racco[n]te
l’antiche imprese, e le scolpisca in marmi
Nè taccia a tanti pregi²⁹ onde rimbomba
Non minor fama mia già stanca tromba.

Torq[u]ato Tasso di propria mano

²⁷ V. *supra*, p. 69.

²⁸ I owe these details to S. Parkin from the British Library.

²⁹ At least three readings, also by Ciampi himself, are given to this place: pregi, pregi, freggi; the reading “pregi” seems justified, with the regard to the sense, as well as to the way Tasso used to connect letters “p” and “r.”



Ill. 1. A fly-leaf with dedicatory ottava to S. Reszka, hand-written by Tasso (copyright British Library, photo S. Parkin).

The spelling of the original is conserved at the most; the new reading is highlighted with the underbars, and here below there's a translation to English, most probably the first one:

A poem to Mr. Stanisław Reszka
egregious Ambassador

Rescio, if I ever surpass harsh mountain
carried with the flight of the Tuscan song
On arrival, I will tell, with ashamed forehead
Where your King has so many horses and arms.
One of yours writes, the other narrates
Ancient affairs and carves them in marble.
About these appraisals may not be silent
My tired trumpet, that sounds with no lesser fame.

Torquato Tasso with his own hand

Short explanation is necessary in these doubtful places.

nuncio

In 16th-century manuscript, letter “c” used alternatively with “z,” especially in words originating from Latin (like here, *nunzio* from *nuntius*) is quite common. Just for comparison, in Latin writings, both forms, *nuntius* and *nuncius*, are of equivalent frequency. And, to start with, in the original it is clearly a letter “c.”

alpestro

In Ciampi we find a word “Alpestra”, which he explains in annotations as “l’Appennino” (i.e. the Apennine Mountains). The word itself quite visibly seems to read “alpestr*” (with minuscule), but it ends with ‘e’-shaped letter, that would suggest the reading “alpestre.” First, I think it is advisable to consult an Italian dictionary of the epoch, namely *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca*,³⁰

ALPESTRE: di qualità d’alpe, rozzo, salvatico, aspro. Lat. *asper, sylvestris*. I.e.: “with Alpine features, rough, wild, harsh [...]”³¹ Grammar would suggest a form „alpestre monte”, but, apart from grammar, *Vocabolario degli Accademici* offers also citations from Petrarca and Boccaccio.

Secondly, here it is why I am inclined to opt for the form „alpestro:” from the text itself it can be seen that in every other instance the Tasso’s *ductus* of the letter “e” is quite different, with really “e”-like look. Moreover, the letter itself looks like an “o” with strange curlicue sign, that, in my opinion, can be explained in two ways: Tasso, inadvertently, made a mistake in writing, putting “o” first, and than trying to make it look as “e;” or: it is an “o”-ending, and the curlicue sign is an initial letter of the word “monte,” connected with the precedent word. Here below I present a few examples from the *Vocabolario degli Accademici*, referred to two discussed aspects:

With regard to the meaning:

Fu per mostrar quanto è spinoso calle, / et quanto alpestra et dura la salita
(Petrarca, Canzoniere 25)

³⁰ *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca*, In Venezia, Appresso G. Alberti, MDCXII; an almost 20-years work (1591–1608), a huge volume *in folio*, in small print, containing 960 numbered charts, of capital importance for researches of Italian Cinquecento.

³¹ Translation in English by author.

Avendo udito lei essere così cruda e alpestra intorno a quelle novelle (Boccaccio, Decameron, II, 9, 28).

Era lo loco, onde ascender la riva, Venimmo, alpestre (Dan. Inferno, ch. 12)

With regard to the ending:

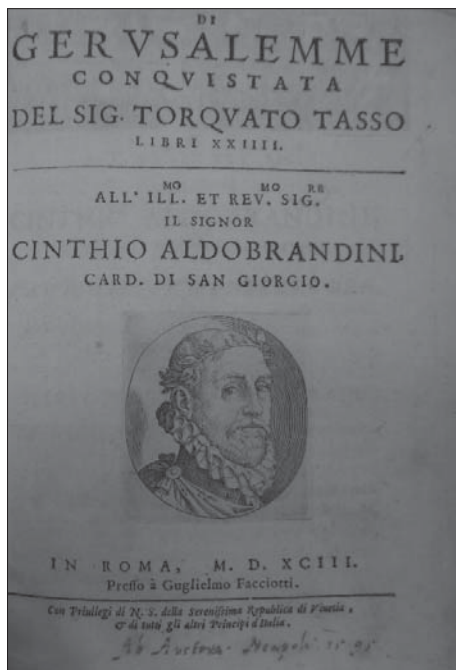
Che dal principio suo dov' è sì pregno dell' alpestro monte (Dante, Purgatorio, 14)

Con quel studio, che fa la tela il ragnolo, Ci studiavám, per quel cammino alpestro, E passavámo or questo, or quel rigagnolo (Il Dittamondo di Fazio degli Uberti)

To sum up, it seems very probable that Tasso had there an adjective, with the meaning “harsh, rough,” as referred to the mountain, and in the form “alpestro,” that is confirmed by the examples when referred to the mountains passages.

antiche

Reading “altere” aroused my suspicions, because the word seemed unfitting in otherwise well-fitted text. Dictionaries from the epoch do allow such reading, but a careful analysis shows that the text itself quite clearly reads “antiche.” If this, for any reasons, could seem uncertain to anyone, it is enough to tell that the *ductus* of a letter “h” in word “ha” (third line) is identical; before “h” there is a “c” written typically for Tasso in the poem, after “h” – we have “e,” as Ciampi, Sarassi and Windakiewicz do. The beginning of the word is agreed by all: “l’a;” then there are three letters difficult to identify. But, again, the same *ductus* of the letters “ant” can be traced in the word “tanti.” Altogether: we have “l’antiche” – which perfectly makes sense.



Ill. 2 .A title page of *Jerusalem delivered*, with the hand-written provenance note by Reszka (copyright British Library, photo S. Parkin).

mia

The last, and the most difficult. Reading “la” seemed clumsy, unfitting and challenging. In the poem, with the help of the zoom feature, it is possible to see three letters. The last “a” is the most sure, the first, almost surely, should be “m,” and the letter in the centre, which could be read as “i” is partly a conjecture, partly an effect of intensive analysis of this place. My conjecture is that the word is “mia” – “my/mine,” and the phrase “mia stanca tromba” – “my tired trumpet.”

There are a few more words that ought to be said with regard to the Tasso’s *ottava*. I hope that the reading presented here offers a satisfactory explanation to the doubtful places. However we should always remember that – maybe except Ciampi – other authors writing about that dedication

have not had this unique opportunity to see the original text of the poem. In the first place I am referring here to Windakiewicz who might have offered Polish readers slightly different translation.

And, last but not least, there is one remaining question that can be discussed with regard to the British Library copy of Tasso's *Gerusalemme conquistata*. On the title page there is a note written most probably by Stanisław Reszka himself, saying: "Ab auctore, Neapoli 1595."³² As Tasso died in Rome, in April 1595, this note induced the author of the auction catalogue to suggest that the poem offered to Reszka was the last literary work by Tasso: "These Verses in all probability contain the last strains of the Dying Swan of Italy [...]."³³ Tempting as it is to think that these are the last words of the poetic genius I would rather assume that without doubt they looked very good in the auction catalogue. It could be also supposed that except few Italian books from the beginning of the 17th century there were no reliable publications on Tasso's life in those days that could have been easily consulted to avoid uncertainty.³⁴

The writing itself is from the 16th century, very similar (or rather identical) to Stanisław Reszka's own hand notes in books preserved by the Jagiellonian Library,³⁵ so we could venture three guesses: a mistake by Reszka; the book sent by Tasso from Rome to Reszka in Naples; a Tasso's visit in Naples between January and April 1595.³⁶

However this is not a question to be discussed here.

³² I.e. (in Latin): "From the author, Naples, 1595".

³³ "Catalogue of [...] library of the late earl of Guilford [...]", *v. supra*.

³⁴ See e.g. G.P. D'Alessandro, *Vita del signor Torquato Tasso*, [in:] *Dimostrazione di luoghi tolti, et imitati in piu autori dal sig. Torquato Tasso nel Goffredo, ouero Gierusalemme liberata. Raccolti da Gio. Pietro D'Alessandro...*, In Napoli, appresso C. Vitale, 1604; or G.B. Manso, *Compendio della vita di Torquato Tasso scritta da Gio. Battista Manso*, In Napoli, nella stamparia di Gio. Domenico Roncalgiolo, 1619.

³⁵ At least five books possessed by Reszka, usually signed with his own hand: "Stanislai Rescii."

³⁶ The third seems the most improbable as the Tasso's last days can be quite surely retraced through the lecture of his letters.

Bibliography

- Catalogue of the valuable and extensive [...] library of the late earl of Guilford. [...] Which will be sold by auction, by mr. Evans [...] 1829*; the catalogue preserved in the British Library, electronic copy available by Googlebooks.
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